

INSPECTION REPORT

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**Inspection carried out Under Canon 806
and in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Name of School **St. Gilbert's R. C. Primary School, Cambell Road, Eccles M30 8LZ**

Inspection date 4th July 2019

Reporting Inspectors Jackie McNally and Louise Frize

Type of school	Voluntary Aided
URN	105954
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	266
Appropriate authority	The Governing Board
Chair of Governors	Anne Marie Horrocks
Headteacher	Donna Kiernan
Religious Education Subject Leader	Donna Kiernan
Date of previous inspection	17 th October 2013

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the Grades
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3=Requires Improvement 4 = Inadequate
Catholic Leadership	1	
The Catholic Life of the school (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness)	1	
Religious Education (incorporating Word)	1	
Collective Worship	1	
The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements		

CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

St Gilbert's Roman Catholic Primary School is an average sized school serving the parish of St John Paul II. The school is predominately one form intake but there are currently two classes in Year 5 and 6. Currently, 99% of learners are baptised Catholics and the majority of staff are baptised Catholics. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is above average with 14% of the pupils having English as an additional language. The percentage of children having Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or an Education Health and Care Plan is 6.4% which is below the national average. The percentage of children who qualify for pupil premium (14%) is also below the national average. Since the date of the last inspection there have been many changes in the senior leadership team. The current headteacher was appointed in May 2019 after holding the position of acting headteacher since September 2018. Similarly, the deputy and assistant headteachers were appointed in June 2019 after holding temporary positions.

THE KEY STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL INCLUDE:

- **The children, staff and governors live the Catholic faith in all aspects of school life and this permeates through school.**
- **The behaviour of the children and their relationships with each other bear witness to the Gospel teachings.**
- **The mission statement truly reflects the dedication, commitment and hard work of all staff and governors to make St Gilbert's the best it can possibly be.**
- **Children's spirituality is developed through high quality, creative acts of worship which provide opportunities for reflection and praise.**
- **Teaching and learning allows pupils to develop to their full potential and religious literacy is a strength of the school.**

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL IS OUTSTANDING

St Gilbert's is an outstanding school and faith is central to all aspects of school life. The headteacher, supported by a skilled and dedicated board of governors strive towards excellence and are determined to ensure that children receive the highest quality education. This commitment to continuous improvement is shared by the whole school staff who are constantly seeking ways to improve further. The recently reviewed mission statement is a living statement which reflects the fact the whole school community is 'growing strong in love and faith'. The children's behaviour is exemplary and through their relationships they show care and respect for others. Opportunities for worship have increased and are now an intrinsic part of school life. Children confidently lead worship and participate with reverence and respect. Teachers plan interesting and engaging lessons which encourage them to reflect upon their faith and understand how the Word of God is relevant to their lives. Welfare is given a high priority and the school reaches out to support those in the community and the wider world through fund raising activities. Pupils have many leadership opportunities and they embrace these responsibilities with confidence and enthusiasm.

THE QUALITY OF CATHOLIC LEADERSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors share a passion and vision for Catholic education. One governor articulated a vision where 'everything revolves around the faith' and this is clearly a shared vision throughout the school. There is a genuine commitment to school improvement and together the school leaders are constantly striving to improve. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and her dedication and commitment to Catholic education is shared by the whole school community. She aims to nurture and support the leadership skills of all staff by giving them the freedom to try new ideas and this means that staff now feel confident enough to embrace leadership roles. The governors are highly committed and demonstrate an excellent understanding of the school. When faced with challenges they are proactive in their responses and have visited other schools to seek new ideas and develop their vision for the future. The chair of governors meets weekly with the headteacher, providing appropriate support and challenge. The governors have been fully involved in writing the self-evaluation document and they take an active role in evaluating the religious life of the

school through visits to the school and during the 5W's working group meetings. The senior leadership team, together with a specialist consultant, have effectively monitored the religious education curriculum and the religious life of the school through book scrutiny, lesson observations and learning walks and this means they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development. Pupil leadership is outstanding and children embrace their responsibilities with enthusiasm. The school GIFT chaplains confidently bear witness to the Gospel values and they have the skills to confidently organise and lead worship.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL (incorporating Welcome, Welfare and Witness) IS OUTSTANDING

At St Gilbert's the staff and children follow in the footsteps of Jesus by demonstrating justice, compassion and love for each other and this is a strength of the school. The staff are excellent role models and their positivity and enthusiasm permeates throughout the school creating a wonderfully warm learning environment. There is a strong sense of belonging to a school community and many parents feel that the school is a second family for the children. The parents and governors praised the school highly and spoke about how they always feel welcome. Over the last twelve months the school has worked hard to develop home school links by establishing a PTA and extending opportunities for parents to participate in religious events such as the pray, stay and play sessions, the travelling crib and the stations of the cross. The welfare of all is given a high priority in the school and children talked about how they felt more confident, secure and happy as a result of the excellent support provided. The school is committed to working towards meeting everyone's needs and it is clear that the SENDCo has an excellent knowledge of the children and the support they require to help them achieve success. The mental health first aider, Caritas worker and sunbeams sessions also provide high levels of support. The Year 6 buddies and school council members enthusiastically support others through activities such as the tooth brushing initiative, paired reading and support on the playground. The school is working towards the UNICEF Rights Respecting Award and this was frequently referred to during lessons. Safeguarding is given a high priority in the school and the children feel safe and secure. The future change makers and the school GIFT chaplains work together to lead fund raising for CAFOD, St Joseph's Penny, NSPCC and local foodbanks. The staff act as role models in witnessing their faith and they are active in promoting the gospel values. All members of the community are encouraged to join together to witness to their faith and join the children on their faith journey.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (incorporating Word) IS OUTSTANDING

At St Gilbert's religious education is at the core of the curriculum. In all lessons observed the teachers were enthusiastic and the range of different teaching strategies used engaged the interest of the children. Open ended questioning was a key feature of all lessons observed and these questions prompted the children to explore topics further and challenged their own thinking. A good pace was maintained in all lessons and children's behaviour was outstanding. When working in pairs or as a class the children shared ideas openly and they were respectful of other people's opinions. The school places a great deal of emphasis on religious literacy and this was evident during the lessons, in the pupil books and when speaking with the children. The children were able to identify Bible stories with similar themes and they were able to recall and refer to their previous learning. By the end of Year 6 the children can confidently use Bible references to find passages. The children are encouraged to think about Big Questions and their responses are recorded in class books. The standard of work in pupil books is outstanding and reflects the high standards also observed in the literacy books. It is clear that teachers have high expectations because the books are beautifully presented and show an interesting and varied range of activities. The pupils' books show progression across the school and by the end of Year 6 the children can confidently articulate and express their faith. The school has adopted good systems for assessing children and the children are tracked as they move through the school with evidence being contained in their 'RE Forever' books. The school places a high priority on professional development and this has been a priority over the last twelve months.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP IS OUTSTANDING

Prayer and worship are at the heart of the school community. Celebrations take place throughout the year following the liturgical calendar and assemblies are always well supported by parents who are invited to write comments in the visitor book. The parents are regularly invited to attend masses and assemblies and they feel an intrinsic part of the spiritual life of the school. During the inspection the school GIFT chaplains led a wonderful assembly which used drama, music, song and audience participation to spread the Word of God. The pupils watched enthusiastically as Scripture

came alive and during periods of reflection there was a feeling of being in the presence of God. Collective Worship has a high profile in the school and the children participate in prayer and reflection with reverence and their singing is beautiful. Every classroom has a prayer focus area which contains objects of devotion and there are focus areas around the school that are regularly changed. The reflection room is beautifully resourced and the school GIFT chaplains are proud of their prayer tree which encourages children to think about and pray for other people. The work of the school GIFT chaplains is recorded in a big book and it is clear to see that they undertake their role with enthusiasm and commitment. As the children move through the school they develop the skills to confidently lead worship; using the Bible to select the Word of God, choosing appropriate hymns and incorporating opportunities for reflection. The children's prayer journey begins in nursery where they are given a book entitled 'St Gilbert's love to sing' and then each week prayers and songs are added to it so that parents can share in the journey and help their children to learn the songs and prayers. Pupils of all ages are happy to write their own prayers and ideas and share them with others.

AGREED AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT

- **To extend the information provided to parents about the religious curriculum and the Catholic life of the school through written communication and via the school website.**